

CLAIMS

1. A method of processing messages, comprising:
 - transmitting a message from a network device to a first computer that is remote from said network device, said message including information obtained from sensors of the network device;
 - receiving the message by the first computer;
 - determining, by the first computer, if a communication containing at least part of the message, including at least some of the information obtained from the sensors, is to be transmitted from the first computer to a second computer;
 - transmitting the communication from the first computer to the second computer in response to the determination made by the first computer; and
 - receiving said communication by the second computer.
2. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the message comprises information regarding usage of the device.
3. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the message comprises an Internet electronic mail message.
4. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the communication generated by the first computer comprises an electronic mail message.

5. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the message comprises an Internet electronic mail message, and the communication generated by the first computer comprises an electronic mail message.

6. The method according to Claim 1, further comprising:
generating, by the first computer, the communication to include summary information regarding usage of the device,

wherein the step of transmitting the communication from the first computer comprises transmitting, by the first computer, the communication that includes the information regarding usage of the device to the second computer.

7. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the network device is a business office device.

8. The method according to Claim 7, wherein the business office device is at least one of a printer, a copier, and a facsimile machine.

9. The method according to Claim 1, wherein said step of transmitting the message comprises:

transmitting said message from the network device to the first computer without going through the second computer.

10. The method according to Claim 1, further comprising:

transmitting a message from the network device to the second computer, said message including said information obtained from the sensors of the network device.

11. A system for processing messages, comprising:

means for transmitting a message from a network device to a first computer that is remote from said network device, said message including information obtained from sensors of the network device;

means for receiving the message by the first computer;

means for determining, by the first computer, if a communication containing at least part of the message, including at least some of the information obtained from sensors, is to be transmitted from the first computer to a second computer;

means for transmitting the communication from the first computer to the second computer in response to the determination made by the first computer; and

means for receiving said communication by the second computer.

12. The system according to Claim 11, wherein the message comprises information regarding usage of the device.

13. The system according to Claim 11, wherein the message comprises an Internet electronic mail message.

14. The system according to Claim 11, wherein the communication generated by the first computer comprises an electronic mail message.

15. The system according to Claim 11, wherein the message comprises an Internet electronic mail message, and the communication generated by the first computer comprises an electronic mail message.

16. The system according to Claim 11, further comprising:
means for generating, by the first computer, the communication to include summary information regarding usage of the device,
wherein the means for transmitting the communication from the first computer comprises means for transmitting, by the first computer, the communication that includes the information regarding usage of the device to the second computer.

17. The system according to Claim 11, wherein the network device is a business office device.

18. The system according to Claim 17, wherein the business office device is at least one of a printer, a copier, and a facsimile machine.

19. The system according to Claim 11, wherein said means for transmitting the message comprises:
means for transmitting said message from the network device to the first computer without going through the second computer.

20. The system according to Claim 11, further comprising:

means for transmitting a message from the network device to the second computer which is local to the device, said message including said information obtained from the sensors of the network device.

21. A method of monitoring at least one network device communicatively coupled to a local network, comprising:

accessing the at least one network device by a service center computer that is remote from said local network to obtain device status information of the at least one network device, including information obtained from sensors of the at least one network device;

storing the obtained device status information;

periodically processing the stored status information to generate a usage report for the at least one network device;

transmitting the usage report from the service center computer to a second computer; and
receiving the usage report by the second computer.

22. The method of claim 21, wherein the transmitting step comprises:

transmitting the usage report from the first computer to the second computer as an e-mail message, wherein said e-mail message is transmitted at an application layer.

23. The method of claim 21, wherein the transmitting step comprises:

transmitting the usage report from the first computer to the second computer as a facsimile message.

24. The method of claim 21, further comprising:

translating the usage report into a format suitable for display on a web page; and
receiving a request for transmission of the usage report from the second computer.

25. A system for monitoring at least one network device communicatively coupled to a local network, comprising:

means for accessing the at least one network device by a service center computer that is remote from said local network to obtain device status information of the at least one network device, including information obtained from sensors of the at least one network device;

means for storing the obtained device status information;

means for periodically processing the stored status information to generate a usage report for the at least one network device;

means for transmitting the usage report from the service center computer to a second computer; and

means for receiving the usage report by the second computer.

26. The system of claim 25, wherein the means for transmitting comprises:

means for transmitting the usage report from the first computer to the second computer as an e-mail message, wherein said e-mail message is transmitted at an application layer.

27. The system of claim 25, wherein the means for transmitting comprises:

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means for transmitting the usage report from the first computer to the second computer as a facsimile message.

28. The system of claim 25, further comprising:

means for translating the usage report into a format suitable for display on a web page;

and

means for receiving a request for transmission of the usage report from the second computer.